

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
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/095 W

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O R 131510Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6072
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 4235

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT MR MO
SUBJECT: MOROCCAN REACTION TO MAURITANIAN COUP --II

REF RABAT 4170

1. THE GOM NOW APPEARS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE ORIENTATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN NOUAKCHOTT. THE MILITARY COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL RECOVERY HAS BEEN SAYING THE RIGHT THINGS AS FAR AS RABAT IS CONCERNED BUT APPREHENSION CONTINUES TO BE EXPRESSED PRIVATELY THAT THE NEW MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO MAKE CONCESSIONS DETRIMENTAL TO MOROCCAN CONTROL OVER ITS PART OF THE SAHARA. MOROCCANS HAVE ACCORDINGLY ADOPTED A "WAIT AND SEE" ATTITUDE.

2. A HIGH MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT ROYAL COUNSELOR REDA GUEDIRA AND SECURITY ADVISOR COLONEL DLIMI WERE DISPATCHED TO NOUAKCHOTT LATE ON JULY 10. ACCORDING TO A DIPLOMATIC SOURCE, MININFO
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KHATTABI PRIVATELY CONFIRMED THAT THEY RETURNED JULY 12 WITH STRONG ASSURANCES FROM THE COUP LEADERS THAT MAURITANIA WOULD MAINTAIN ITS CLOSE TIES AND COMMITMENTS TO MOROCCO. GUEDIRA AND DLIMI WERE REPORTEDLY ALSO TOLD THAT THE CAUSES OF THE COUP WERE PURELY INTERNAL AND UNRELATED TO FOREIGN POLICY.

3. FRENCH AMBASSADOR HERLY TOLD AMBASSADOR JULY 13 THAT THOUGH MOROCCO HAD KNOWN SOMETHING WAS IN THE WIND BEFORE THE COUP, HE HAD NO EVIDENCE OF MOROCCAN INVOLVEMENT. HE HAD ALSO LEARNED FROM THE MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR THAT THE NEW MAURITANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD VISIT MOROCCO JULY 21. THE MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR HAD SPECULATED THAT HIS FONMIN WOULD GO ON FROM HERE TO PARIS. HERLY BELIEVED THAT THE MAURITANIAN SITUATION LOOKED STABLE FOR THE SHORT TERM AND FAVORABLE TO MOROCCO. HOWEVER, HE QUESTIONED MAURITANIA'S LONGER TERM STABILITY, SUGGESTING THAT THE POLISARIO'S CEASEFIRE COULD CREATE RIFTS IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT. HERLY ADDED THAT THE CEASEFIRE, IF SUSTAINED, COULD ALSO GENERATE PRESSURE ON FRANCE TO WITHDRAW ITS MILITARY SUPPORT, INCLUDING USE OF JAGUARS. IN THAT CONNECTION HE SAID FRANCE HAD NO INTENTION OF ALTERING ITS CURRENT POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA.

4. MOROCCAN REACTION TO THE POLISARIO'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF A UNILATERAL CEASE-FIRE HAS BEEN LIMITED. MINISTER OF INFORMATION KHATTABI TOLD AFP THAT NO OFFICIAL GOM COMMENT COULD BE EXPECTED UNTIL MAURITANIA REACTED TO THE MOVE. KHATTABI ADDED THAT HE PERSONALLY VIEWED THE ANNOUNCEMENT AS A DIVERSIONARY MANEUVER RATHER THAN A CREDIBLE PEACE GESTURE. MOROCCAN PRESS HAS NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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YET REPORTED THE CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCEMENT.
ANDERSON

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NNN

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